

BLACK UNDERTHINGS

Black underthings
denote a woman of passion
Pastel undies indicate
a young woman on the make
White and fleshtone is worn
by the liberated female.

Likewise a downy dark
upon the upper lip is the mark
of Scorpio.

This secret language that we speak
more clearly than plain English.

-- David Barker

Salem OR

HANDS ACROSS THE FRONT SEAT

With the car in the shop, the rent at the
racetrack and busses as regular as whales
I try hitchhiking for the first time
in years.

Not only are the cars bigger than ever and
air-conditioned, too, they must be hermetically
sealed: I get nothing but fishy looks from
double knits who see Hurstwood written
all over me.

Then I remember that the most likely rides are
the ones you can hear coming, and sure enough
three black guys in a Badmobile pick me up.
I sit on the spare, straddle a case of
1000 wt. oil.

I've got a little gin, somebody comes up with
a number, and it gets to be funny:
3 chauffeurs and massa on de tire.

Then we take turns, everybody gets a few blocks
in the back. Then I drive and all three of them
get the feel of it, knees up PTA style.

The solid citizens are wary: we cruise down
Huntington Blvd. like Moses had parted the

Cadillacs for us. And at the corner where I go north, they stare as Leroy hazes the bus till I can get aboard.

The driver takes my last quarter, looks me over. "Room toward the back," he says, frowning and shaking his head at the setting sun.

KATE

came through town with her
corncob pipe and her stash and
her mucusless diet.

Kate has had her share of
troubles: two abortions, an
IUD embedded in the wall of
her uterus and a tubal ligation
with complications.

Kate wants only her dream place:
75 acres of wooded land, a fresh
water lake and nobody else for
miles.

"I plan to drag logs through the
forest," she says, "and make a
log house and get inside with
those big logs all around me."

HOUSEWIFE

She does not
look

into

mirrors, she
looks

at

them to make
sure they are

clean.

PAST PERFORMANCES

I look at the outstretched hand and then at the man behind it who says, "You're Mary's second husband, right? She's got your picture under some stuff in the attic."

"I was third."

"And I'm fifth. But last, friend. She's one changed gal."

The horses are acting up in the paddock. Fillies and maiden fillies at that. Whatever their minds are on, it's not running.

"So. Mary says you're out here every day." He shook his head. "Every day, Jesus. You must be awful lonely." He looks at his program. And his 50¢ tout sheet. And two newspapers. "Everybody picks that favorite."